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SUBJECT: GEN. DAYTON TALKS JAF TRAINING FOR PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN

REF: 08 AMMAN 3164

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

**¶1.** (C) Summary: U.S. Security Coordinator Lieutenant General Keith Dayton met on January 19 with Special Advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces HRH Lieutenant General Prince Faisal bin Al-Hussein, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Khaled Sarayreh, and Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command Brigadier General Ali Jeradat to describe the successful training of Palestinian security forces at the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC). This was Dayton's first visit with the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) senior leadership because previous efforts were focused on the Public Security Directorate (PSD). He introduced the possibility of providing specialized training to the Palestinian Presidential Guard under JAF auspices. The Jordanians were receptive to the idea and took on board the message that this training needed to be coordinated through USSC to make sure all sides - Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians - bought in fully. End Summary.

**¶2.** (C) General Dayton separately reviewed for his three interlocutors the role of USSC in facilitating the training so far at JIPTC of 1500 Palestinian security forces from the PA's National Security Forces and the Presidential Guard, and their subsequent deployment in various regions of the West Bank. He cited their superb performance as one of the brighter spots in terms of improving security and stability in the West Bank over the past year, and observed that the success has been lauded even by Israeli officials who are enthusiastic about continuing the program. (Note: Dayton privately told the Ambassador that Israeli military officials had informed him they were able to draw some of the IDF troops necessary for the recent Gaza operation from the West Bank because its stability was made possible in part by the presence of the JIPTC-trained Palestinians.) Dayton said 500 trainees (the 3rd NSF Battalion) would graduate on January 28, and that a fourth class of 500 (the 4th NSF Battalion) would begin in February. He cited the strong support from Congress - amounting to USD 160 million so far to fund PA security sector reform - for JIPTC training, senior leader training, and helping to create a functioning Palestinian Ministry of Interior.

**¶3.** (C) Dayton expressed strong appreciation for the support the PSD had provided in running the JIPTC program, and raised the possibility that the JAF might also be able to play a similar role for the Presidential Guard in particular - even as he stressed that the idea was still in the concept stage. He pointed out that a key element of the success of the JIPTC training program was that it had the strong backing of Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority. This was essential, as efforts by the PG to independently negotiate a training regimen with the Jordanian Special Operations

Command had been stymied because Israel refused to let the trainees leave Israel without their program having been vetted and supported by USSC.

¶4. (C) Dayton cited great potential to do more specialized training for the PG, but urged that it be done in a professional and orderly manner and that it be marked by openness and transparency. General Jeradat confirmed that indeed the Presidential Guard had privately arranged during 2008 with JSOCOM for training, but that they never showed up.

He agreed that any future training - if approved by the Jordanian leadership - should be coordinated in a similar fashion to the JIPTC program. Jeradat urged General Dayton to engage directly with the PA to urge them not to allow the PG to make private arrangements with Jordan. Dayton noted that "old habits are hard to break," and that the PG had grown accustomed to engaging in such private arrangements, but doubted this problem would happen again. Jeradat said the PG could be trained in VIP personal protection and could receive SWAT-type training from the Jordanian Special Forces.

However, he said, the issue of counter-terrorism training was sensitive and would not be done at the Yajouz facility but rather out in a Zarqa facility.

¶5. (C) At a subsequent meeting with General Sarayreh, Dayton provided a similar brief and reiterated that he had not received instructions to expand training by JAF, as additional funding had not yet been approved, but that Washington remains keen on expanding the training of Palestinians in Jordan. He highlighted the possibility of JAF training for Palestinian border guards - an idea raised by the PA itself. Dayton also raised the issue of possible CT training for the PG, but noted that it was a sensitive

issue in Washington and the decision to proceed would require further coordination between the USG and the Jordanian military leadership. Sarayreh was positive about the prospect of providing JAF training to the Palestinian PG - though he said it was a matter of political will and required approval at the highest levels in Jordan. He promised to raise the idea with King Abdullah. Sarayreh expressed some concern that Israel might balk, but General Dayton assured him that this was not the case. "Israel is anxious for more Palestinian capability and respect the Jordanians," he concluded.

¶6. (C) In Dayton's meeting with HRH Faisal, the Prince suggested Jordan could form a joint cadre for PG training from Jordan's PSD, JAF, the new Jordanian Gendarmerie, and the General Intelligence Department. The Prince was more explicit than Sarayreh on the possibility of training Palestinian border guards, saying "we can help." However, Faisal warned that the Palestinian forces must not be seen as collaborating with the Israelis, which would backfire on PA President Mahmoud Abbas. He acknowledged that institution building with the PA Ministry of Interior would take time, and could not be rushed. Echoing comments Post has heard frequently from other senior Jordanian officials, Faisal expressed alarm at former U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Bolton's proposal - published on January 5 in the Washington Post - that Gaza be placed under Egyptian control and that Jordan take over the West Bank in some capacity (reftel). The Prince strenuously rejected the idea.

¶7. (U) General Dayton cleared on this cable.

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